

SUCCESSFUL EPA RESPONSES TO HURRICANE HARVEY

EPA responded to Hurricane Harvey by integrating support to federal, state and local agencies and by providing unique assets to assess environmental impacts. One example of integrating support is that EPA staff were embedded into TCEQ to support assessment of drinking water and waste water systems. This effort resulted in the assessment of 625 drinking water systems and 2,000 waste water systems that serve over 7 million people. EPA's integrated support to TCEQ, the Coast Guard and Corps of Engineers resulted in the investigation of over 400 potential hazardous substance releases, responses to over 200 spills and retrieval of over 500 loose containers. EPA is now joining the JFO to address safe disposal of debris.

In terms of unique contributions, EPA provided over 100 hours of aerial pollution release screening by the ASPECT aircraft in 28 flights. This platform provided federal, state and local governments critical information on chemical fires at the Arkema facility as well as 134 Risk Management facilities, 456 drinking water plants, and 105 waste water facilities impacted by Harvey. Two of EPA's TAGA mobile air pollution detection vehicles have been deployed for over 50 hours through neighborhoods that border industrial facilities to detect pollution that may result from industries starting up after the storm. At a rate of 210 pollution measurements per minute, over 630,000 measurements have been taken to date. EPA's 'PHILIS' mobile laboratory has also been deployed to provide onsite laboratory analysis with preliminary results in 24 hours. Over 600 analyses for the assessment of Harvey impacts were processed. Finally, EPA secured, inspected, and obtained confirmatory samples from all 43 Texas NPL sites to document there were no pollution releases caused by Harvey. PHILIS also assisted in this by processing over 2,500 samples to supplement analyses by contractor laboratories.